GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COAL
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:26
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2003
ACCIDENT IN SINGARENI COLLIERIES
N.N. KRISHNADAS;NEDURUMALLI JANARDHANA REDDY

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 17 persons were trapped in Godavri Khani Coalfield of Singareni Collieries Company Limited in Andhra Pradesh in June, 2003;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) the loss sustained by the coal companies thereby;

(d) whether any inquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(e) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the persons found guilty;

(f) the ex-gratia and compensation paid to the dependents of victims;

(g) whether the government have ordered all the collieries to undertake threat assessment in the pre-monsoon phase to prevent the re-occurrence of such tragedies; and

(h) if so, the steps taken by the collieries in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COAL (SHRI KARIYA MUNDA)

(a) to (h) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Parts 9a) to (h) of the Lok Sabha Starred Question No.26 for answer on 22.07.2003 regarding accident in Singareni Collieries.

(a) Yes, Sir. 17 Workmen were drowned due to inundation in 7 LEP Mine of Godawari Khani of Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd. on 16.06.2003

(b) On 16th June, 2003 in 1st shift top section development workings of No.3 seam got connected with bottom section workings of the same seam that had been extracted in conjunction with hydraulic sand stowing and was containing water. This led to inundation of the top section working and drowning of seventeen workmen.

(c) SCCL has lost a coal production of 41,000 tonnes due to one day token strike in the Ramagundam Region and 3,168 tonnes at GDK-7LEP mine from 16.6.2003 to 25.6.2003.

(d) & (e) Yes, Sir. A preliminary enquiry by SCCL and Departmental enquiry by Internal safety Organisation of SCCL has been conducted in this regard. On the basis of preliminary enquiry, SCCL management had already suspended Shri J. Nagaiah, Agent, Shri A. Ravi Kumar, Manager, Shri Abdul Gafoor, Safety Officer and Officiating Manager and Shri P. Papi Reddy, Surveyor.

The Statutory Enquiry by the DGMS Officer has already been initiated as per the provision of the Mines Act, 1952. A Court of Enquiry is in the process of being set up by the Government under Mines Act, 1952.

(f) Details of ex-gratia and compensation paid to dependants of victims are:

- An ex-gratia of Rs.25,000/- has been paid to meet the immediate funeral expenses.

- Compensation as per Workmen`s Compensation Act due to fatal accident.

- A special Ex-gratia of Rs.6.00 Lakh per workman has been paid as declared by Hon`ble Chief Minister of AP (Rs.3.00 Lakhs from Company and Rs.3.00 lakhs from Chief Minister`s Relief Fund)

The total compensation paid to each worker`s family under Workmen`s Compensation Act and the special ex-gratia varies between Rs.8.79 Lakhs to Rs.10.41 Lakhs.

The total terminal benefit comprising special ex-gratia, compensation, Insurance, Provident Fund and Gratuity etc. varies between Rs.12.56 Lakhs to Rs.19.67 Lakhs to the family of each deceased workman.

(g) Yes, every year before monsoon directive are issued by DGMS to mine management in this regard. This year also it has been issued for compliance.

(h) Following steps are being taken by SCCL to prevent accidents due to inundation from surface water in monsoon.

(i) As per the guidelines of DGMS, pre-monsoon statutory check surveys have been carried - out both on surface and underground to assess the danger of inundation.

(ii) 7 mines have been identified having potential danger of inundation from surface water as their workings lie below HFL of River Godavri or Nallah

(iii) Standing orders on safety management have been displayed in local language on notice boards and at prominent places for increasing awareness of the workmen

(iv) Escape routes were identified and marked in underground workings.

(v) Check-surveys are being conducted by special teams in every operating mine at regular intervals

(vi) During monsoon season Sr. Officers conduct surprise checks on existing arrangements.

(vii) Liaison is being maintained with Meteorological department and Central Water Commission, to give warning about impending heavy rains and also to give intimation at the time of opening of flood gates in case of excess flow of water into reservoirs

(viii) Addressing supervisors and executives on the risk of inundation and to bring awareness among them

After the above disaster in SCCL on 16.6.03 at GDK -7 LEP mine, Safety audit has been conducted in all the mines of SCCL to assess the threat of inundation due to similar cause. All the stowed panels are now proposed to be treated as `likely water bodies`.

In such mines, the following measures are proposed to prevent recurrence of such inundation accidents

1.The preparatory stopping in bottom most level of the stowing panel shall be so constructed as to provide good drainage, till the panel is finally sealed off and shall be closed at the last stage of isolating the panel with specially built water seals.

2.While working over the stowed panels, the parting shall be continuously ascertained by drilling boreholes at every junction and at a interval of 10 mtrs.

3.All the minor faults known while working the bottom section shall be clearly marked with throw in the combined plan so that bore holes of adquate length can be put for ascertaining thickness of parting as well as presence of water

4.These test holes shall be reamed to top-up sand to ensure that the voids are filled, if at all found. Proper stowing has to be ensured.

5.For every stowing district there should be positive drainage at the bottom most level for each panel.

6.Awareness programme and precautions against the inundation shall be taken up among all the officers of the company.